



Ashtabula County

**BASKETBALL
FOUNDATION**

*Awards Banquet
and
Hall of Fame Induction*

Sunday, April 12th 2015

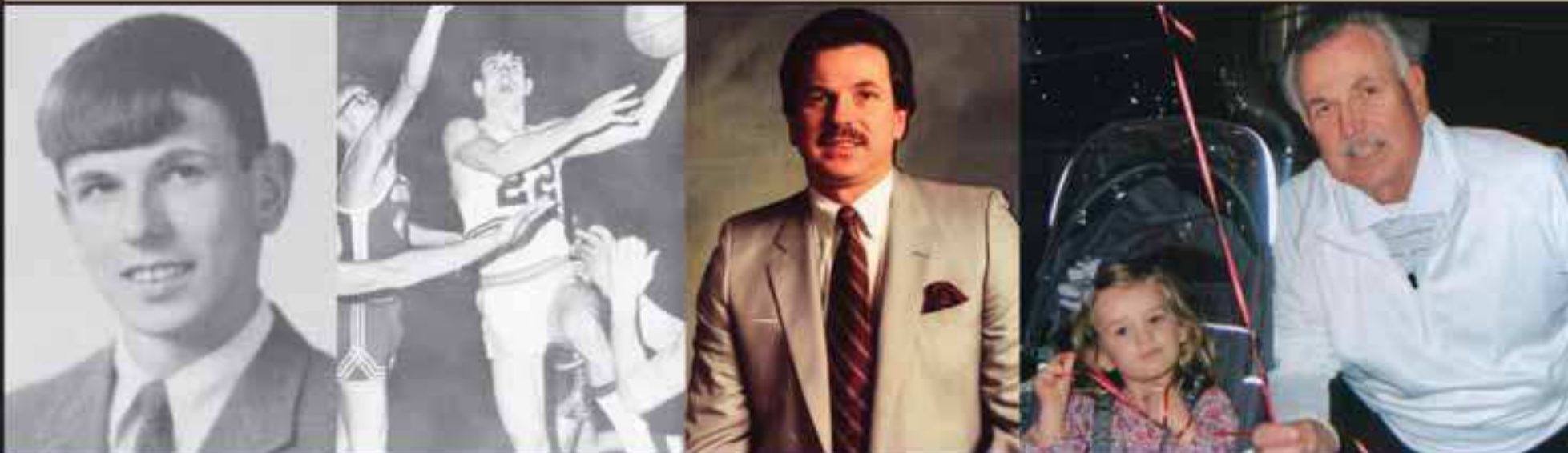


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KELLY EASTON
Grand Valley HS



KRYSTAL HENSON
Grand Valley HS



DOUG HITCHCOCK
Pymatuning Valley HS



JENNIFER JOHNSTON
Conneaut HS



JOHN KAMPF
Grand Valley HS



BILL KAYDO
Ashtabula HS



KIKI McNAIR
Jefferson HS



BOB NAYLOR
Conneaut HS



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Edgewood HS



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DAVE TIRABASSO
Geneva HS

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Conneaut HS



ELI KALIL
Edgewood HS



ZAC SWEAT
Geneva HS



LEXI ZAPPITELLI
Conneaut HS



KATE CROOKS
Edgewood HS



LINDSEY MAYLE
Geneva HS



ZACH OSCAR
Grand Valley HS



SAM HITCHCOCK
Jefferson HS



REGGIE BRYANT
Lakeside HS



JESSICA VORMELKER
Grand Valley HS



EMILY SMOCK
Jefferson HS



CARLY APONTE
Lakeside HS



CHASE THURBER
Pymatuning Valley HS



ZACH MASSUCCI
St. John HS



KELSEA BROWN
Pymatuning Valley HS



ALICIA NGIRAINGAS
St. John HS

STAR BEACON ALL-ASHTABULA COUNTY

FIRST TEAM

Zac Sweat (Sr.) Geneva
Sam Hitchcock (So.) Jefferson
Sam Caskey (Sr.) Jefferson
Reggie Bryant (Jr.) Lakeside
Chase Thurber (Sr.) PV

SECOND TEAM

Justin Myers (Jr.) Conneaut
Jacob Adams (Jr.) Jefferson
Alex Gerdes (Jr.) Conneaut
James Jackson (Sr.) Jefferson
Lucas Hitchcock (Sr.) Jefferson

STAR BEACON ALL-ASHTABULA COUNTY

FIRST TEAM

Emily Smock (Jr.) Jefferson
Lexi Zappitelli (Sr.) Conneaut
Jessica Vormelker (Sr.) GV
Sarah Juncker (Sr.) Geneva
Kelsea Brown (Sr.) PV

SECOND TEAM

Megan Stech (Sr.) PV
Cheyenne Bosse (Fr.) St. John
Jessica Becker (Sr.) Jefferson
Kaileigh Sloan (Jr.) Edgewood
Kat Hall (Sr.) PV

PROGRAM

National Anthem	Karl Pearson (recording)
Invocation	Steve Sargent
Welcoming Remarks	Brad Ellis (President)
Banquet Dinner	Phil's Catering
Introduction of All-County Team	Becky Olmstead
Introduction of Coaches and HOF Nominations	Dawn Zappitelli
ACBF Hall of Fame Inductees	Dave Miller

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Edward Jones/David Flautt Scholarship	David Flautt
ACBF Special Recognition Award	Bob Hitchcock
ACBF Coaches'/Referees'	
Appreciation Scholarship	Dawn Zappitelli
ACBF Officials' Appreciation Award	Phil Garcia
ACBF Alumni Achievement Award	John Higgins
ACBF Coach of the Year (Girls)	Melody Nowakowski
ACBF Coach of the Year (Boys)	Al Goodwin
ACBF Player of the Year (Girls)	Doug Hladek
ACBF Player of the Year (Boys)	Chris Larick
Closing Remarks	Mike Joslin Nick Iarocci

IN REMEMBRANCE

Don Cannell (1935-2014)

Don's career in education and coaching began at St. John High School but was interrupted by his induction into the United States Army. Following his discharge from the service, Don returned to St. John, where he met Charlotte Pastor, also a teacher there. Don and Charlotte were married for almost 53 years before his death on Jan. 9, 2015. The Cannells had two sons, Kevin and Brian.



DON CANNELL

After his service with the U.S. Army, Don spent the next 25 years at St. John High School, holding various positions, including biology teacher; assistant coach in football, basketball and track; head coach for cross country and tennis; and for four years, head basketball coach.

Don was named the Star-Beacon's Ashtabula County Basketball Coach of the Year for 1966-67. It was the first time a first-year mentor had won the award. Prior to becoming the principal of St. John in 1981, Don had served also as athletic director and administrative assistant.

In June 1985, Don left St. John to work for the Painesville Township School District, first as assistant principal and athletic director for John R. Williams Junior High School and later in the same roles for Riverside High School. In 1993, health issues forced Don to retire, but he eventually came out of retirement for a few years to assume various part-time duties at his beloved St. John, that had now become St. John and Paul School.

When he returned to St. John, Don was a constant presence at Herald activities, particularly basketball games, the sport he loved.

Until he became incapacitated from Parkinson's Disease, Don always played an active role in his community. He was a volunteer for the American Heart Association and was a former member of the Parish Council of Mt. Carmel Church. He served as a board member for both the Ashtabula County Touchdown Club and the Ashtabula County Basketball Foundation.

In 2005, the ACBF inducted Don into its Hall of Fame.

In 2006, at a banquet/roast, the basketball court in St. John's Mahoney gymnasium was named "Cannell Court" to honor Don for his contributions to the school. The next year, Don was inducted into the St. John Hall of Fame.

Bill Koval (1935-2015)

Bill graduated from Burgettstown Union High School, received his undergraduate degree at Findlay College and earned graduate degrees from West Virginia University and Kent State University.

After his college graduation, Bill took the job he loved at Geneva High School, where he dedicated 37 years as a teacher and counselor, with additional responsibilities in the area of scheduling. Bill also spent many years coaching basketball, golf, and baseball, and will be best remembered for his long and successful tenure as head basketball coach, going 352-248 (.567) in 27 seasons between 1967 and 1994, with six Northeastern Conference championships, seven sectional titles and a district crown in 1971-72.

Bill finished his career as one of the longest-tenured and winningest basketball coaches Ashtabula County has ever seen. He was selected to the Ashtabula County Basketball Foundation Hall of Fame with the inaugural class in 2003. Since Bill retired, only one Geneva boys basketball coach has posted a winning record, his son-in-law, Brad Ellis, who played for Bill and counts him among the influences on his own coaching.

Bill's expectation that others work hard came naturally. The son of a Russian immigrant who came to America and worked in the coal mines, Bill lost his mother when he was one year old. His father raised the family, teaching them the value of hard work, before he himself died when Bill was 19 or 20 years old and at Findlay College.

The only way Bill could even attend college was to pay his own way. He did that by working two jobs, one at a restaurant and another at a potato chip factory, in addition to wrestling for one year and playing basketball on independent teams. Just finding time to study was a chore.

Bill used a simple formula for his success as a basketball coach — play good defense, move the ball around, get good shots and don't turn the ball over.

Several of Bill's players — Jay McHugh, Gary Kreilach (as a senior), Randy Knowles, Ernie Pasqualone, Norm Urcheck, Brad Ellis and Mike Blauman — have been inducted into the ACBF's Hall of Fame.

He and his wife June, whom he had married in 1956 while still in college, did a great job of raising two sons, Erik and Mike, and a daughter, Kim.

Bill liked golf, fishing, and woodworking where he particularly enjoyed making things for others. Bill and his "Junie Girl" always looked forward to visiting family and friends and especially their annual winter trip to Florida.



BILL KOVAL

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Craft blessed to be from Ashtabula

Point guard credits his success to where he grew up

By **CHRIS LARICK**
For the Star Beacon

Dan Craft realizes how fortunate he was to grow up in Ashtabula.

“As I’ve gone through life, I’ve come to realize how well-taught and well-coached I was,” said Craft, a member of the 2015 class of the Ashtabula County Basketball Foundation Hall of Fame. “I look back and realize that all my coaches were outstanding people as well as coaches. I think about their words to this day. I met some great people going through Ashtabula schools and have a lot of great memories.”

Craft’s father was himself an athlete at Harbor High School. Dan grew up watching him play fast-pitch softball with some of the outstanding Ashtabula teams.

Some of Craft’s fondest memories are from when he started learning sports by playing catch with his brother Jeff.

He began his organized sports career in the fifth grade at Station Avenue Elementary School, after learning his craft in driveways and backyards.

By the time he reached West Junior High School, Craft had established himself as one of the best point guards in the area on a loaded team that also included Jim Hood, Eugene Miller, his brother Jeff (two years younger) and Joe Lyons.

When he moved up to his freshman year, Craft came under the tutelage of Bob Walters, assisted at the time by Bill Oppenheimer. From there, it was on to Ashtabula and coach Gene Gephart. The Panthers were an excellent team in that era.

“We had a lot of good teams going through,” Craft said. “We were 20-2 my senior year (1969-1970).”

Though Craft was one of the main cogs on those teams, there were

plenty of others, including 7-foot center Jim Gilbert.

“They were big and great leapers,” Craft said.

He did manage to average 15 or 16 points a game, though, and was All-Northeastern Conference, Star Beacon All-Ashtabula County and All-City as a junior and senior.

“Basketball was probably my favorite sport,” he said. “We played basketball all summer, went against players like Randy Knowles and John Hejduk. We’d get five or six of us in a car and go to Conneaut.

“Bill Fails was the coach at Conneaut at the time and he’d say, ‘We’re having open gym. Bring your boys.’ We’d play for four or five hours. We’d go to Euclid and play. There was a lot of competition. When you play against good competition, you get better.”

Craft played quarterback on the football team, with Randy Pope and John Warren as assistants.

“They were all cool guys, but were old-school,” Craft said. “We worked ‘til we dropped. We always opened up (the schedule) against Warren Western Reserve, one of the best teams in the state at that time.

“We were more a run and option quarterback team, but I would throw the ball to Doug Humphrey and Pat McNamara. Philip Coleman was a great running back. Charles Moore was young then, but he was one of the best running backs I’ve ever seen.”

Craft also played a lot of baseball, particularly as a shortstop or second baseman with the American Legion team in the summer.

“I probably got more notoriety from that than anything else,” he said. “Their games were always in the (Star Beacon). I played with guys like Mark Wagner, Kenny Laveck and Jim Rose from Jefferson. We’d play 44 or 45 games a summer, play double-headers almost every Saturday or Sunday and two-night doubleheaders on Friday.”

When he graduated, he found the decision of which college to attend a simple one.

DAN CRAFT

• **SCHOOL:** Harbor High School Class of 1970

• **POSITION:** Point Guard

• **ACCOLADES:** Two-time All-NEC, All-Ashtabula County, All-City



“It was based on money,” he said. “I went to Baldwin-Wallace for free. That made my choice easy; we weren’t rich, didn’t have a lot of money. And I liked the coaches a lot.”

Craft played three years of football for the Yellow Jackets, before injuring a knee on a clip.

As a freshman and sophomore at B-W, he played some at quarterback until the team instituted the run-and-shoot offense and a better thrower took over the position. He was then moved to cornerback and free safety.

He also played baseball his freshman year.

“I was led to believe that I could play both sports,” he said. “But they had spring football practice and football is what got me there, so I stuck with football.”

Like so many college students, Craft wasn’t sure what he wanted to major in. He originally entered the science program but finally decided on education.

He had remained in close contact with his high school coaches, so when he graduated in 1974, he found an opportunity in Ashtabula.

“Frank Farello was instrumental in helping me get into teaching and coaching,” Craft said.

Craft was hired as a teacher and coach at West Junior High, where Farello served as principal and spent two years there before being asked to take over the elementary physical education program.

“I was coaching the backs in football for Ashtabula and got the head baseball job my second year,” he said. “I remained as a backfield coach under Wash Lyons, but there were no openings in basketball.”



Submitted Photo

DAN CRAFT established himself as one of the best point guards in the area during his time with the Harbor Mariners.

See **CRAFT**, Page 19

Easton helped GV do impossible

Forward fondly remembers epic Mustangs' comeback against Berkshire

By **CHRIS LARICK**
For the Star Beacon

Down by five points with five seconds left in a basketball game.

No chance of winning, right?

That didn't prove to be the case for the Grand Valley girls team of 1995-1996.

Kelly Easton (now Zirzow) stood at the free throw line in that exact situation against Berkshire.

"I was a terrible free throw shooter," Zirzow, a 1996 Grand Valley graduate, admits. "I missed the first and missed the second, but put it (back) up and in and we were only three points down. They fouled me on the shot.

"I knew I had to miss it. They didn't box me out and I got the rebound again and dribbled out to the 3-point line. I didn't want to take it, so I threw it to Krystal (Henson Force) and she made it. We went into overtime and won.

"There's always a way, that taught me that. (Berkshire) was one of the big teams that year."

Zirzow, selected to the class of 2015 of the Ashtabula County Basketball Foundation Hall of Fame, began her basketball career early.

Tall (she reached 6-feet or so in high school), Zirzow caught the eye of Tom Schamberg, who asked her if she would play for his fifth- and sixth-grade team when she was in the third grade.

"My parents wouldn't allow it," Zirzow said. "They thought that was too much of a jump."

But she made that leap when she reached the fourth grade and eventually played three years at the fifth- and sixth-grade level.

She moved on in the Grand Valley

system, reaching the high school team, coached by Ron Chutas, and playing varsity as a freshman. Among her teammates were Wendy Chutas, April Easton (her cousin) and Heather Chessman. Krystal (Henson) Force, joined the Mustangs team as a freshman when Zirzow was a senior.

"We were always at .500, if not better," Zirzow said. "We always had a rivalry with PV and Cardinal was pretty good at the time. Berkshire was also pretty good."

Zirzow averaged about 18 points a game as a senior. She won four letters in basketball. Her sophomore year she was an honorable-mention All-GRC and Star Beacon All-Ashtabula County selection. As a junior she moved up to first-team all-conference and all-county, second team all-area and All-Northeast Lakes District and Honorable Mention All-Ohio. After her senior year she earned even more accolades, repeating as first-team all-conference and all-county and moving up to first-team all-area and All-Northeastern Lakes District. In addition to making second team All-Ohio in Division III, she was named the Grand River Conference's Player of the Year. She finished her career with 843 points and 155 blocked shots.

In addition to basketball, Zirzow was a star in volleyball, under Wilson, and the GV softball team.

Her softball team made it to the regionals.

"I did well, but basketball was always my love," she said.

After graduation from Grand Valley Zirzow had several offers from Division III colleges, but West Liberty (in W. Va.), a Division II school, was able to offer her more money, and she jumped at the chance.

"I really liked it," she said. "Jimmy Henson and Lindsey French went there, so we had a little pipeline going."

Zirzow played four years for the Hilltoppers, starting at center or power forward for three of them and scoring more than 1,000 points, while averaging about 18 points a game as a senior, graduating in 2000. In 2006 she was selected for the West Liberty Hall of Fame, the same year she was picked for Grand Valley's Hall of Fame.

KELLY EASTON (ZIRZOW)

- **SCHOOL:** Grand Valley High School Class of 1996
- **POSITION:** Forward
- **ACCOLADES:** 18 points per game as senior; three-time All-GRC, Star Beacon All-Ashtabula County; two-time All-Northeast Lakes District, All-Ohio.



In her sophomore year at West Liberty Zirzow injured the meniscus in her knee. Doctors thought she had a tear but when surgery was done, no tear was found. She still earned second-team all-conference honors, however.

"That was the only year we didn't make the NCAA tournament," she said. "We were always close (to winning a tournament game) but were always one-and-out. My senior year we lost by one on a buzzer-beater. That was rough."

The Hilltoppers won at least 20 games in three of Zirzow's four years there, the exception being her sophomore season. They won their conference in her freshman and senior years and won the conference tournament every year except when she was a sophomore.

West Liberty's coach at the time was Lynn Ullom.

"He got some good players," Zirzow said. "I still follow them and go to their games once in a while. When they play Notre Dame or Edinboro, I go."

Zirzow majored in education, graduating in December, 2000, getting a job in Howland. From there, she moved on to Garrettsville, before landing a job in intervention at Grand Valley Middle School. She's been there 12 years.

"There are four of us in special education who help kids with their reading," she said.

She also serves as JV coach for the Grand Valley girls team under Kim (Henson) Triskett.

Zirzow married Erich in 2002. Erich is currently in clinical research at University Hospital in Cleveland.

The couple built a house in Orwell. The Zirzows have three children: Izabella, 11; Logan, 9; and Charlice, 3.



Submitted Photo

KELLY EASTON was named to the all-state team twice during her time at Grand Valley.

Henson's hard work paid off

Guard's success with Mustangs led to record-breaking career at Edinboro

By **CHRIS LARICK**
For the Star Beacon

Early in her basketball career, Krystal (Henson) Force shared her primary aspiration with her father, Grand Valley boys basketball coach Tom Henson.

"I told him, 'I want to get a scholarship to play college basketball,'" Force said. "He said, 'If you work hard, I'll help you.'"

Force, a member of the 2015 class of the Ashtabula County Basketball Foundation, went on to realize that dream and more. She not only earned a scholarship to Edinboro University, she became a star there.

"I did it all my life," she said. "I could go (to Grand Valley practices) with my dad and work on it all year-round."

Force's older sisters, Kim and Kelly, had both starred at Grand Valley before her. Naturally, Krystal played whatever sport was in season — volleyball, softball or basketball — with and against them.

Her organized basketball career began in the fourth grade, when she started playing in a traveling league with the Orwell fifth- and sixth-grade team coached by Tom Schamberg, playing with girls like Laura Easton, Michelle Collins, Knicole Baker, Missy Holley and Laura Mraz.

"We were pretty good in the fifth and sixth grades," Force said. "It always came down to Madison and us. It seems like every time we lost to Madison in the tournament."



KRYSTAL HENSON (FORCE)



Submitted Photo

KRYSTAL HENSON (FORCE) was a county and conference player of the year at Grand Valley before going on to play at Edinboro University (where she's shown dribbling above).

In the seventh and eighth grades she played with Jackie Panek on the Grand Valley Junior High team coached by her uncle Jim and Tracy Nelson, a squad that did "pretty well" according to Force.

The game that Henson remembers the best from those years was a contest against Edgewood. The game was tied with 10 seconds left. The Mustang coaches drew up a play for Henson, but she wasn't open and passed it to Baker, who made the winning shot.

By the time she was a freshman, Force was ready to play varsity basketball under coach Ron Chutas, meaning she got to start with players like Kelly Easton, who is part of this year's ACBF Hall of Fame class.

At that time Grand Valley was a member of the East Suburban Conference. The Mustangs' hopes for a league championship were constantly being frustrated by a neighbor school.

"We were always getting beat by PV (Pymatuning Valley) my sophomore and junior year," she said. "In my freshman year Berkshire was 15-0 and we beat them at their place."

Force will always remember that game because of the extremely unusual way it ended.

"We were down by five points with five seconds left," she remembers. "Kelly Easton was fouled but missed both shots. She got the rebound and put it in, and was

fouled again. She missed (deliberately this time), got the rebound and threw the ball to me. I hit a three-pointer to tie the game and we beat them in overtime."

In her sophomore year, Chutas had to miss a game against Bristol because his son was graduating from college and Krystal's uncle Jim took over as head coach.

"They were a really good team at the time," Force said. "We ended up beating them in triple overtime. In the third overtime we were up. My Uncle Jim had told us to be smart and not take bad shots."

"Well, I was open at the 3-point line and I shot it and made it. My Uncle Jim called a timeout and got on me for shooting that shot because

KRYSTAL HENSON (FORCE)

- **SCHOOL:** Grand Valley High School Class of 1999.
- **POSITION:** Guard
- **ACCOLADES:** 1,491 career points, 453 career assists, 346 career steals; Ashtabula County Player of the Year, East Suburban Conference Player of the Year; 16th on all-time scoring list at Edinboro University, school record for made 3s in a season at Edinboro (88) and career (275).



it wasn't a smart shot.

"I look back and chuckle at this game because my dad has always told me that I have never seen a shot that I didn't like. He was right. I saw that 3 and thought it was a good shot to take. Good thing I made it because I might have gotten yelled at more by my uncle if I hadn't made it."

In her senior year, Force, a 5-foot-3 guard, starred with a Mustangs team that also included Tara Schamberg, Baker, Kim Brouse and Alyssa Winer. She was named Player of the Year in the county and conference, averaging somewhere between 23 and 25 points a game.

That year she posted her career mark in points for a game against Newbury.

"It's funny to hear Coach (Bob) Johnson talk about this game because he always says no matter what they did, I would just move further back from the 3-point line and make my shots," Force said. "The funny part about this is that my high school boyfriend had broken up with me the day before, so instead of being sad about it, I got mad and scored 43 points in the game the next day."

Force finished her high school career (in 1999) with records for points scored (1,491), assists (453) and steals (346). Her point total was only recently surpassed.

In addition to basketball, she starred in softball under Cyndi Thomas as a pitcher and in volleyball under Tracy Nelson. Despite her

See HENSON, Page 24

Hitchcock helped PV to unbeaten season

Point guard was key to Lakers run to regionals

By **CHRIS LARICK**

For the Star Beacon

All that was at stake when Pymatuning Valley traveled to Conneaut to take on the Spartans in the winter of 1988 was the unofficial Ashtabula County championship, the state ranking of each team and the continuation of the Lakers' unbeaten season. Conneaut, which had gone unbeaten through its first 10 games, had been beaten earlier in the week by Madison by one point, and had hopes of delivering a similar fate to PV.

Oh, and there was pride, lots of pride.



Lakers' point guard Doug Hitchcock, who will be inducted into the Ashtabula County Basketball Foundation's Hall of Fame on Apr. 12 at the Conneaut Human Resources Center, remembers the frenzied atmosphere before the contest.

"Jack Root was always a big supporter of Pymatuning Valley basketball," Hitchcock said. "He and my mom left at two o'clock for the game, though they weren't going to open the doors until five o'clock. Conneaut had lost the night before, but that didn't detract from the atmosphere or excitement. Sean Freeman had transferred from there and they were getting on him in warmups, especially the stage crew. But he played well. That game was what high school sports is all about."

Garcia Gymnasium quickly filled up and several hundred other fans watched the game on a big screen set up in the Conneaut cafeteria.

Hitchcock set the tone for the game right away, putting what was described as a "body check" on Spartans' star Matt Zappitelli.

Zappitelli managed to score 32 points while connecting from all over the court. But Conneaut shot only 35 percent from the floor as a team and fell to the Lakers, 75-67, led by Steve Oman and Jason Poole, who combined for 43 points.

Pymatuning Valley went on to finish that

DOUG HITCHCOCK

• **SCHOOL:**

Pymatuning Valley High School Class of 1988.

• **POSITION:** Point Guard.

• **ACCOLADES:** 10 points per game as a senior; 1988

Grand River Conference

Player of the Year, Star Beacon All-Ashtabula County first-team selection, named to All-Ohio team.



regular season unbeaten, the first time that had happened since the Lakers team led by Bob Hitchcock, Doug's dad and the PV coach, did it. Then the Lakers advanced through sectionals and districts until being stopped in overtime by O.J. McDuffie and the Hawken Hawks in the regionals.

Considering his father's credentials, it is no surprise that Doug Hitchcock was introduced to basketball at an early age.

"Probably when I was born," he laughed. "I didn't have a choice. I remember Dad taking me to open gyms. He wasn't the coach at the time. I played in PV Primary in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades. In about 1982 he started coaching again. I'd go to the gym after school and practice and do drills."

A few of his teammates in those early years — Rod Brown and his cousin Gordy, for example — would contribute on the great PV teams of the late 1980's.

"Rod had a lot of older brothers and I had an older sister who played," Hitchcock said. "We'd have pickup games as a family."

Hitchcock credits Dave Roberts, who took the PV players all over the place for games, with much of his success.

"He was an integral part of the program at PV," Hitchcock said. "He doesn't get a lot of credit. He always said, 'You've got to start 'em young.' He did that for years for Pymatuning."

In the seventh and eighth grades, Hitchcock's class was coached by Brad Marinchak (now an official) and Tom Batdorf.

"We were a winning team, but the team that always beat us was Grand Valley," Hitchcock said. "They had Lowell Moodt, Carl McElroy and a good group. They were always our nemesis. That helped us out, playing good competition. We played LaBrae and (Warren) JFK. That opened our eyes a little bit, showed us that it's not what kind of talent you have, it's your work ethic."

When he reached high school, he played



Submitted Photo

DOUG HITCHCOCK goes up for a layup during his time at Pymatuning Valley. As a senior, Hitchcock was the point guard on a Lakers team that went unbeaten during the regular season and advanced to regionals.

See **HITCHCOCK**, Page 22

Horner was Conneaut's Ms. 999

One shy of 1,000 points for her career, forward was still a star for Spartans

By **CHRIS LARICK**
For the Star Beacon

Reaching the 1,000-point plateau is considered a great achievement in high school basketball.

But what about players who wind up with 999 points in their careers? Not as much.

That's why it's difficult to find Conneaut's Jennifer (Johnston) Horner's name on the list of prolific scorers in Ashtabula High School basketball history.

Yes, she missed by a single point, perhaps because no one realized exactly how close she was to the mark.

"I thought I was close," said Horner, a member of the 2015 class of the Ashtabula County Basketball Foundation Hall of Fame. "I didn't know I needed one more point at the tournament game at Edgewood. I missed some free throws; I should kick myself in the butt."

Horner belongs to a more select sorority of scorers, anyway. How many players can say they scored exactly 999 points in their high school careers?

Also, she accumulated 1,024 rebounds for the Spartans, surpassing 1,000 in a category that is probably more difficult.

Horner's earliest athletic memories are of tee-ball at the CLYO, with her parents (Duane and Michele Johnston) urging her on.

"My parents were the type who wanted me to play everything," Horner remembers. "I tried out for so many things, including Penny Armeni's dance school at the



Submitted Photo

JENNIFER (JOHNSTON) HORNER scored 999 points during her career with the Conneaut Spartans .

(Conneaut) Community Center."

At least partially because of her height (she reached 6-1 or 6-2 in high school), Horner gravitated toward basketball.

Spartans' girls basketball coach Tom Ritari, took notice of Horner early at his

basketball camps in the summer.

"I played in the elementary and middle school programs," she said. "All my friends were part of it. It had a community feel."

She recalls that it was a "big deal" when she tried out for the Rowe Middle

School team. By the time she was in the eighth grade, Ritari invited her to practice with the high school team during open gym in the fall. She also played in the Perry summer league program.

"That's when I really got hooked," she said. "It became my passion. All my

efforts were related to basketball."

Also in the summer of the eighth grade, she developed her skills with other teens at the Conneaut Township courts.

"Mia Lytle and I would ride our bikes there," she said. "That was very impor-

JENNIFER (JOHNSTON) HORNER

• SCHOOL:

Conneaut High School Class of 1998.

• POSITION:

Forward.

• **ACCOLADES:** Graduated as Conneaut's career leader in rebounds (1,024) and points (999); two-time all-conference, all-district and honorable mention all-state; class valedictorian; played at Dartmouth and scored four points in an NCAA Tournament game as a freshman.



tant to our development as players. You can learn a lot more playing with boys than girls sometimes.

"When the park was closing, the park guys would ask us to move our cars to the other side of the street, but they let us keep playing until the lights shut off around 11."

When Horner reached high school, she became an immediate starter as a freshman. Through her four years there she played with a group that included Tara Church, Mary Beth Herb, Katie Fails, Gretchen Showalter, Melissa Vogler, Melissa Anderson and Erica Wallace. Perhaps the best teams of the four years occurred when Jessica Olmstead moved up to Conneaut High School when Horner was a junior.

"Those were two of my favorite years," Horner said. "(Olmstead) was so much fun to play with. She made such perfect passes. The years Jessica and I played together we were more competitive. We definitely relied on my rebounding. We were a passing team with good wings to get you the ball.

See **HORNER**, Page 20

Through injury, Kampf finds his calling

Breaking arm at young age showed Mustang his impact on sports was through writing

By **CHRIS LARICK**
For the Star Beacon

It's no joke to say that John Kampf fell into his writing abilities.

As a result of breaking his left arm three times after falls, Kampf's physical activities were limited.

"That's how I got into writing," said Kampf, who will be inducted into the Ashtabula County Basketball Foundation's Hall of Fame on Apr. 12 at the Conneaut Human Resources Center as a contributor. "I couldn't take part in physical education classes.

"My mom was an English teacher (at Grand Valley High School) and had us write journals."

In addition to personal information, Kampf, who loved basketball, wrote accounts of Super Bowls and the 1977 NBA playoff finals between the Philadelphia 76ers, led by Dr. J (Julius Erving) and the Portland TrailBlazers, who featured Bill Walton, in his early writing efforts.

Not that Kampf gave up sports altogether. But it was a struggle, partly because of the broken arms, caused by falling out of a hayloft, tripping on a tree root while playing football with cousins Bill and David Nye and diving for a ball in a volleyball match against Gary Frankln. Perhaps more damaging was the surgery on a brain tumor he had in the first grade.

"That hurt my motor skills on my left side," he said. "It cut my motor skills in half."

Nevertheless, he became a passable athlete,



Submitted Photo

JOHN KAMPF speaks as part of a high school wrestling show with Ray Milavec (center) and Guy Trinetti. Kampf participated in sports during his time at Grand Valley, but after breaking his arm at a young age he discovered his talent and passion for writing.

playing Little League baseball on the Rome White Sox with Gary Fernandez, Paul Magda, Cliff Vasko, Jeff Takacs, Franklin and others.

"We were pretty good," he said. "We won our Little League championship against Orwell, who had Jimmy (Henson) and Mick

Shoaf. I also played youth basketball in Orwell with Jimmy Henson and Carl McElroy."

Eventually Kampf played on the very good Grand Valley teams of 1984-1987, coached by Tom Henson and assistants Mick Zigmund and Tony Hasset.

He didn't get to start, though, since he played the same position as Jimmy Henson, his best friend, but he still loved the experience.

"Those were good times, playing ball with

See KAMPF, Page 21



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Kaydo battled through tough circumstances

Despite losing his father, center had exceptional career at Ashtabula

By **CHRIS LARICK**
For the Star Beacon

Bill Kaydo's father died during his junior year at Ashtabula High School.

Aside from grief, the family was blindsided by other, practical problems, like how to support the family of 10 — Kaydo, his mother and eight siblings — without the main provider.



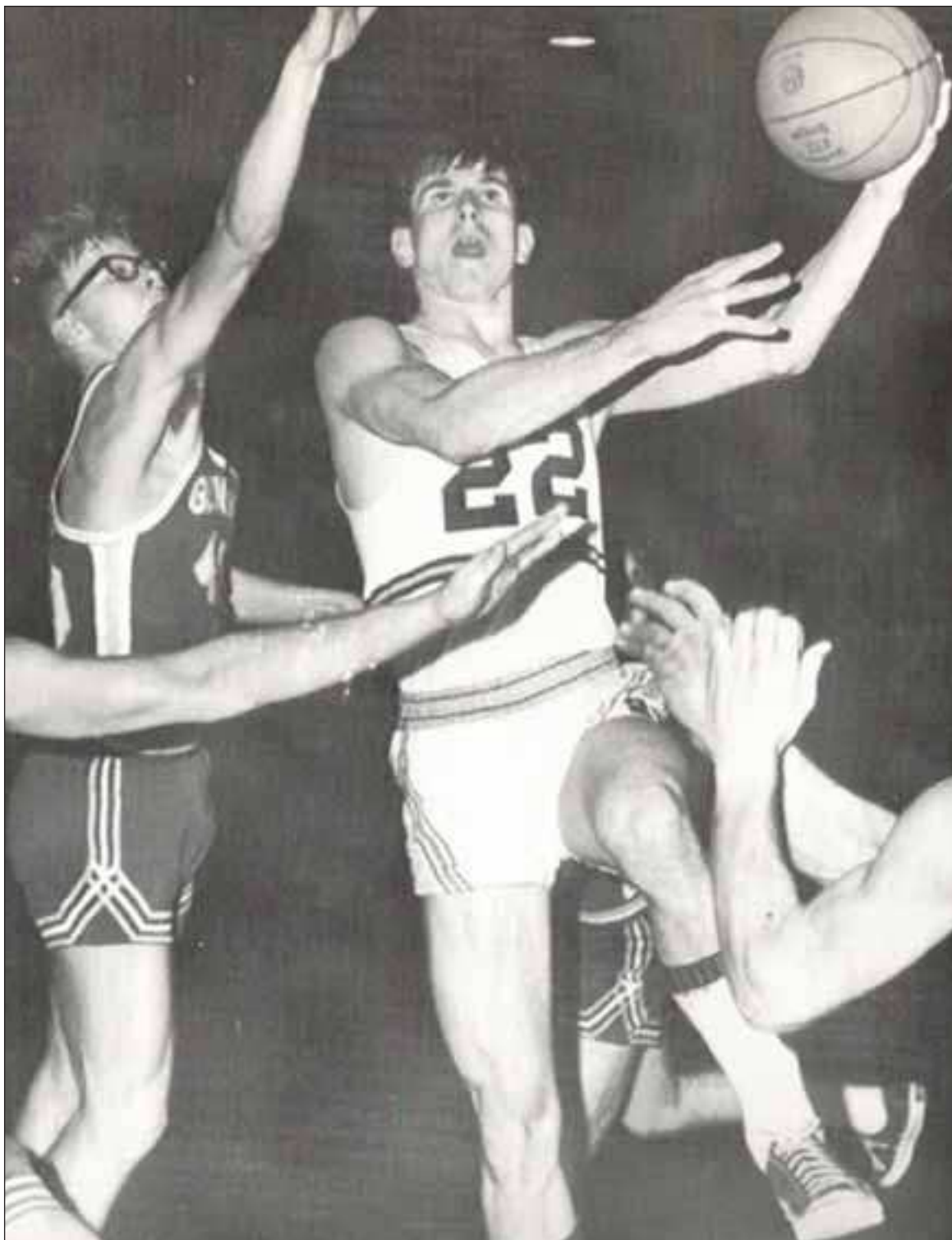
Most of the siblings were able to support themselves, since Bill was the baby of the family. But Bill, an outstanding basketball and football player

for the Panthers, had dreams of going to college.

"My siblings (brothers Steve, Frank, Mike and Robert and sisters Catherine, Shirley, Elizabeth and Lillian) did what they had to do so I could go to college," Kaydo recalls. "Their efforts let me go to college and sent me some spending money. My sister Betty took care of Mom, paid the bills after Dad passed away."

Kaydo, who is part of the class of 2015 of the Ashtabula County Basketball Foundation Hall of Fame, started playing basketball in a manner common to many kids of his era — on neighborhood courts. Like many others, Kaydo and his group of friends would shovel snow out of their driveways to play in the winter.

"I lived on the west side (of Ashtabula)," Kaydo said. "I played basketball and football in the neighborhood. We would shovel out the driveway and use a heat lamp to shine a light through a bedroom window. I played with



BILL KAYDO, shown driving for a layup against Geneva, started at center as a sophomore for Ashtabula High School.

guys like Dungy (Tony) Presciano, Dr. Jack Bell, Don Sneck, Dave Dewey, Tony Tipiero, Eric Forde and Randy Dramis. Every

day (during that season) we played tackle football on the blacktop. We're friends to this day."

When he reached the fifth and sixth grades he was playing basketball at West Junior High under coach Robert (Bob) Davis with

BILL KAYDO

• SCHOOL:

Ashtabula High School.

• POSITION:

Forward.

• ACCOLADES:

Two-time All-Ashtabula County, All-NEC; honorable mention All-Ohio as a senior.



players like Alvin Benton, Andy Nappi, Eddie Cheatwood and Pete Sardella against area teams.

"We played eight or nine games," Kaydo said. "(Davis) was pretty good at coaching fundamentals and teaching us the game. We didn't lose many, maybe one or two for the whole time I was there."

Kaydo also played junior high school flag football at Guarnieri Field with basically the same group of kids.

In his freshman year he played tight end, wide receiver and defensive end on an undefeated West Junior High School team.

Kaydo played freshman basketball under Bob Walters, a man he still admires.

"I played with Bob after high school and college, probably for 15 years," Kaydo said. "He was a great competitor and, I think, the best basketball player to come out of this county. He is a great gentleman and a great teacher. He's now the shooting coach at Lakeside. I respect him greatly."

That freshman team included most of the players that formed the nucleus of some very good Panther teams for the following three years. In addition to Kaydo, Benton, Cheatwood and Nappi, players like Larry Alberts, Phil Fain and Jerry Lyons came over from State Road School to contribute.

When he entered his sophomore year, Kaydo came under the tutelage of Gene Gephart. Kaydo becomes emotional when talking about Gephart's influence on him.

"My dad died during my junior year of high school," he said.

See **KAYDO**, Page 20

Submitted Photo

Jefferson's McNair was ahead of the curve

Versatile player did a little bit of everything with the Falcons

By **CHRIS LARICK**
For the Star Beacon

Katherine (Kiki) McNair was always ahead of her time.

"I started throwing a tennis ball against our garage door when I was four or five," she remembers. "Basketball came soon after."

McNair, who was selected as a member of the 2015 class of the Ashtabula County Basketball Association's Hall of Fame, started playing in Jefferson High School girls basketball camps in the fifth and sixth grades. By the time she was in the seventh grade, the high school team asked her to practice with the varsity while playing on Jefferson's junior high team.

"We played teams in the NEC (Northeastern Conference)," she said of the group that also included Laurie Gregg, Lori Lendzian, Jan Brininger, Lindsay Jo Browning and Cassie Borsukoff, "We won some and lost some."

At about 5-foot-10 (she was tall early but stayed at that height), McNair was the definition of versatile. She generally played point guard, shooting guard or small forward because of her athletic ability but could mix it up in the paint and often found herself playing center on defense.

"In my freshman year I played defense against Ashtabula's top player, a center," she recalls.

Most of the time in high school, she wasn't placed at center.

"I didn't bring the ball down the floor," she said. "I was tall for a guard. I was really good with assists. My junior year I averaged about 18 points a game, my senior year only about 13."

Jefferson went to the regional finals in McNair's junior season



Submitted Photo

KIKI McNAIR goes up for a shot against Madison during her time at Jefferson.

(1995-96). In their attempt to make it to state, the Falcons led Trinity, 8-5, early in the game.

"They called time-out, pressed us full-court and won by 30 points," McNair remembers.

"That year we needed overtime to beat Madison for the conference championship. In the tournament, we beat Lakeview, which was ranked No. 4 in the state."

The Falcons lost standouts like

Ryan Ruble, Stacy Allen and Christine Anderson to graduation the next year, but added freshman standouts Kelly Kapferer, Mary Herendeen and Becky Hamper. In the district finals they lost to Villa

KIKI McNAIR

• **SCHOOL:**

Jefferson High
School Class of
1997.

• **POSITION:**

Guard/Forward.

• **ACCOLADES:** Top defender on Jefferson team that went to regionals; started for three seasons at Loyola University New Orleans.



Angela-St. Joseph's.

"My junior year we played as a team," McNair said. "One game demonstrates how we were a team through and through. At the end of the year against Madison, at the end of the game I was double-teamed and passed the ball to Laurie Gregg despite the fact that the play was designed for me. She waited for me to get open. She threw the ball back to me and I pulled up and made the shot. We went into overtime and won. We always came together as a team.

"My senior year was one of my most precious memories, going through those four years with each other. I am grateful for those friendships."

After high school graduation, McNair enrolled at Kent State as a student. That didn't click for her and she transferred to Loyola of New Orleans after a year-and-a-half at a family member's suggestion.

"It was beautiful and it had my major (religious studies)," she said. "I tried out for the coach and he said 'I'd love for you to play for me.'"

She started for the Loyola Wolfpack for three years, from 1999 to 2002.

"I hadn't played at Kent at all, so it took a while (to get the rust off)," she said. "But it's like riding a bike, you don't forget how.

"It was a whole new experience. I played one through five, brought the ball up, played guard. On defense I played one through five."

After graduating from Loyola in

See McNAIR, Page 25

Naylor let it fly with the Spartans

Point guard key member of great Conneaut teams in mid 1960s

By **CHRIS LARICK**
For the Star Beacon

Andy Garcia always had a firm grip on the reins as Conneaut's basketball coach.

There was one time, though, that Bob Naylor recalls Garcia loosening his grasp.

"The only time I remember Andy Garcia giving anyone the green light on shooting was my last game in the district tournament," Naylor said. "We were playing Edgewood, which had Dan Foster on that team. We had beaten them twice, but we couldn't score. (Garcia) took me aside and said, 'Let it fly.' I scored 36 points, which was the district record at that time. There was no 3-point shot then. That was just one of those nights. (Garcia) was a believer in pass the ball first."

Naylor, who is part of the 2015 class of the Ashtabula County Basketball Foundation, was just one of several stars on the Conneaut teams of 1963-65, a cast that also included Tom Ritari, Tom Naylor (an uncle of Bob's) and Ron Richards, all of whom are already in the ACBF Hall of Fame. Other important players included big Don Goodman, Bob Rogers and Joe Sedmak.

Naylor began his basketball career back at Broad St. Elementary School. Henry Garvey founded a basketball team there with his son Jeff, Naylor, Clyde Loughlin, Brad Kaiser and John Senstrom. That team played squads from Mount Carmel and other area schools.

Naylor wound up playing junior high basketball in Conneaut, which at the time had just one building for grades 7-12. In his freshman year, he was, along with two other players, Jeff Garvey and Jim Colangelo, called up to the varsity.



Submitted Photo

BOB NAYLOR was part of a successful string of teams at Conneaut in the mid 1960s.

"At that time, if we played varsity athletics in the ninth grade, we were ineligible to play at the ninth grade level in any sport," he said. "But I would've been called up on the track team anyway."

As a freshman, Naylor played junior varsity as a freshman, then some varsity as a sophomore. On those teams he played alongside Tom Naylor (his uncle), Tom Ritari, Don Goodman, Vince Mucci and Jeff Garvey.

At that time there were no basketball camps. But Andy Garcia started a summer recreation program in Conneaut. Though no coaching was allowed, the Conneaut players all were on the same team.

"We played all summer long, uncoached," Naylor said. "At that

point Jon Hall (Sr.) was the JV coach while Andy was the head coach. That was probably the most perfect blend of coaches you could have. Garcia was all defense and Hall was a well-rounded coach who was very innovative on offense. We worked so well together in my junior year that we won our first 12 games. People started calling us 'Garcia's Dream Team.'"

That 1963-64 team allowed just 34 points a game, which led the state among AA (smaller) schools as Conneaut went 15-3.

"We could score, though," Naylor said. "We played teams like Mentor and the Painesville schools. We were really a good team, a great blend of players."

The following year, Naylor's senior season, Conneaut and Rowe merged. Though there was a lot of talent on the combined team, it didn't mesh.

"We probably had the top talent in the county," he said. "We had two guys that were 6-6 and 6-5 (Joe Sedmak and Don Goodman) and our forwards were a good size. But it didn't seem to blend. We had a winning season, but never really meshed."

In Naylor's freshman year the NEC consisted of Conneaut, Ashtabula, St. John, Geneva, Mentor, Harvey, Riverside, Wickliffe and South.

"It was really a tough conference," Naylor said. "But then it started breaking up and at some

BOB NAYLOR

• **SCHOOL:**
Conneaut High
School Class of
1965.

• **POSITION:** Point
Guard.

• **ACCOLADES:**
Named first-team All-NEC and All-Ashtabula County; played basketball for two years and ran track for one at Case-Western Reserve University.



point got down to four teams. Ashtabula had Gene Gephart (as a coach) then and Geneva had Al Bailey. They were all defense-minded coaches."

Garcia might have been the most defense-minded of the bunch. According to Naylor, who played point guard on the Conneaut teams of that duration, Garcia had five rules: "No. 1, play defense; No. 2, play defense; No. 3, play defense; No. 4, take the best shot; No. 5, play more defense."

"Garcia's offense was geared to center scoring, so the center position always had to have a big scorer, had to accept that role. As a guard, I scored around 12 points a game; the center was always around 16."

At Conneaut, Naylor made first-team All-NEC and All-Ashtabula County once or twice.

Naylor also played football (he was the starting quarterback as a sophomore, then moved to running back and defensive back).

"We were a pretty good team when I was a sophomore, then went downhill after that," he said.

He was also a sprinter in track, enjoying a lot of success in the 100 and 220. He went to state in the 220 and a relay as a junior, and, at track coach Harold Ladner's suggestion, added the 440 to his repertoire as a senior, a rare trifecta in those days.

In his senior year, the state created a regional meet, which brought schools from the east side of Cleveland into the competition to make state.

See **NAYLOR**, Page 19

For love of the game

Schulte's passion for basketball translated to success at Harbor

By **CHRIS LARICK**
For the Star Beacon

It wouldn't be surprising to discover that 1982 Harbor graduate Dana Schulte has orthopedist Dr. William Seeds on his speed dial.

"I just had my fifth knee surgery," Schulte recently said. "Dr. Seeds is one of my good friends."

Schulte is in the process of rehabbing the knee now. Otherwise, he'd be on the basketball court at the Ashtabula YMCA with friends Andy Juhola, Jim Chiacchiero and Augie Pugliese. As soon as he's able to, that's where he'll be again, defying the gods of human anatomy.

That's how much he loves basketball.

"I'm stupid like that," said Schulte, who will join Juhola and Chiacchiero in the Ashtabula Basketball Foundation Hall of Fame as part of the class of 2015.

Schulte was inducted into the Ashtabula County Touchdown Club last December. The honor was certainly deserved, since he starred as a quarterback at Harbor from 1978 to 1981 and again at West Virginia Wesleyan and Ohio Wesleyan from 1982 to 1986, with a year off because of transfer.

But his favorite sport was always basketball, from the time he started playing with his four older brothers in the family driveway,

"In the first, second and third grade I was always outside," he said. "We'd shovel the snow off in cold weather and play basketball."

By the time he was in the fifth grade, Schulte had developed his game enough to make the sixth grade team at Thomas Jefferson with friends Raimo Kangas and



Submitted Photo

DANA SCHULTE warms up before a game during his time at Ashtabula Harbor.

Kirk Wilburger.

"We started together," Schulte said. "That was one of the reasons we performed so well at high school."

When that group reached Columbus Junior High it was joined by Saybrook additions

Dean Hood and Pat Colucci.

"That gave us a core all the way through," Schulte said. "We won the freshman championship. My junior year the other players were Mike Ginn and Tom Quinn. When we were seniors, Andy Juhola came up and played with us as a

sophomore. He gave us double-doubles as a sophomore. I took him under my wing; I was a captain and he became a complete player."

Under coach John Higgins the Mariners went 17-7 when Schulte was a junior with a sectional

DANA SCHULTE

• SCHOOL:

Ashtabula Harbor High School Class of 1982.

• POSITION:

Guard.

• ACCOLADES:

Member of Harbor teams that went 17-7 his junior season and 18-4 his senior year; named MVP of Kent State Ashtabula basketball team.



championship and one district victory. His senior year Harbor was even better, going 18-4.

"We beat 'Bula three times that year, once in the tournament," Schulte said. "They had always intimidated us and had Terrence Hanna and Kevin Hanna. They beat us up in junior high school, but we won as freshmen. The intimidation factor was less and less."

While the Harbor cast was talented, Schulte gives Higgins kudos for managing it.

"Coach Higgins was one of the best coaches I ever had," Schulte said. "I loved playing for him. We had such a strong rapport. Coach Higgins was a great motivator, good with the Xs and Os and knew how to use people.

"He believed in me, put the ball in my hands as point guard. He was ahead of his time, using the pick-and-roll like you see in the NBA. I have nothing but great memories of Coach Higgins and the things we were able to accomplish. All of our guys worked hard."

Schulte estimates that the Mariners played four to six hours a day at Brooker Park in the summers.

"All we wanted to do was play basketball," he said. "That gave us so much leadership and accountability. Hard work will get results."

Schulte was more than a basketball player, however. He led the

See **SCHULTE**, Page 23

Silvieux saw all angles of the game

Edgewood grad contributed as a player, official and sports editor

By **CHRIS LARICK**
For the Star Beacon

Ron Silvieux is one of a rare breed, having served as a basketball player, official and sports editor during his career.

It isn't that unusual for a player to cross over to the other side and become an official. But it is very rare for that same person to also serve as a sports editor.

Silvieux made the Ashtabula County Basketball Foundation's Hall of Fame class of 2015 as a contributor.

"I had a lot of interest in sports, mostly high school and college basketball," said Silvieux, who graduated from Edgewood in 1953.

Silvieux eventually grew to become 6-4, but he got that growth later, some of it even after he graduated. In high school he played guard.

Set to start his senior year for the Warriors, Silvieux broke his wrist before the first game. He had played football as an end for Edgewood.

"I caught a few passes but was mainly a blocker," Silvieux said. "We played in leather helmets at that time."

The Warriors were not a good team during that time.

Silvieux also ran track, competing in the long jump and high jump. He once high-jumped 5-3, a good mark at the time. The Fosbury Flop, which revolutionized the art of high-jumping, didn't exist until much later.

"We did the barrell roll then," he said. "That was a long time ago."

After graduation, Smoky Cincinnati convinced Silvieux to try to get a scholarship to Newbury (S.C.) College.

"We drove down there and I played about a week," Silvieux said. "I didn't like it. I got homesick. I was in my 20s, had been out of high school a couple of years. It was all segregated down there; they had black and white drinking fountains."

Silvieux was working at the Rockwell Brake plant at the time, "making pretty good money at that time," as he said.

He thought about getting into coaching. When the sports editor's job at the Geneva Free Press opened up in the mid '50s, he took that instead.

RON SILVIEUS

• **SCHOOL:** Edgewood High School class of 1953
• **ACCOLADES:** Ran track and played football at Edgewood; starred in several independent leagues around Ashtabula; Sports Editor at the Geneva Free Press.



"That was the best job I ever had," he said. "I didn't make a lot of money, but I got to go to games, type up the games and take and develop pictures."

"At that time you had to take a lot of pictures. We covered a lot of things, including Little League."

Al Bailey was the head basketball coach at Spencer, then at Geneva during those years.

"He had a little temper," Silvieux laughed. "He was my neighbor and we played together for a few years (in independent leagues)."

Silvieux also did some officiating, but found he didn't care for it that much.

"I felt sorry for the underdog," he said.

After he graduated from Edgewood, Silvieux became a star in the various independent leagues around Ashtabula, starting with Sterling Jewelers, a team that also included players like Ducky DiPietro, Ray Kovacs, Ray Peet, Dick Benham and Ray Secchiarri.

In addition, he played in the Industrial League with the Pruden Chicks, a team that included Al Bailey, Norv Turner, Dolph Tersigni, Jim Ayers and Dale Arkenburg. Other teams he played for included Rockwell, Brake, Berry's Minks, the Geneva Free Press and Astatic Local 3655. Silvieux was normally the high-point scorer on those teams.

One time in 1957 or 1958, Bevo Francis, the star who had scored a record 113 points in a game for Rio Grande College against Hillsdale College, came to the county with his barnstorming team, to play Astatic which included Silvieux and ACBF Hall of Famer Jerry Puffer. Francis's team won, 95-79, but Silvieux guarded the 6-foot-9 Francis and outscored him, 26-19.

Silvieux eventually quit the Free Press to make more money. He and a friend built homes for a while. Then, in 1964, he obtained a job at the Linde Wire Plant, part of Union Carbide. He worked there for 30 years, retiring in 1998.



Submitted Photo
RON SILVIEUS lays in a bucket during his playing days. Silvieux had a successful career in sports as an athlete, basketball official and sports editor.

See **SILVIEUS**, Page 25

Spencer was a prolific scorer

County's record holder for points in a game enters HOF

By **CHRIS LARICK**
For the Star Beacon

Al Schubert thought he had just missed an Ashtabula County record when he scored 51 points in a game for Austinburg in 1953.

Williamsfield's Harvey Hunt was unaware that he had (supposedly) set a standard when he notched 53 in 1957.

For a while, until Hunt's total was unearthed in the 1990s, it seemed that Geneva's Jay McHugh's 52-point night against West Geauga in the tournament was the mark to match or exceed.

In truth, everyone was wrong about all of those performances. Dorset's Bob Spencer had already scored 61 points in a 117-17 demolition of Colebrook on Dec. 19, 1947. That should stand as the existing county record if and until some other, unknown performance comes to light.

If unlikely, it is possible. Consider the following statement published in the Star Beacon after Spencer's great game:

"The score recorded by Coach Stan W. Simpkins' Dorset quintet is especially spectacular when considering the fact that under present-day basketball rules the team against which the basket is scored gets possession of the ball on the next play. Under rules of years ago the center jump after every bucket enabled a big team to hold possession of the ball virtually the entire game."

In addition to Spencer's individual mark, Dorset's team total of 117 shattered the then-county record of 103, previously held by Rowe.

Spencer will be inducted posthumously into the Ashtabula County Basketball Foundation Hall of Fame on April 12 at Conneaut Human Resources Center.

According to the aforementioned



Submitted Photo

BOB SPENCER (11) shown in a Dorset team photo, scored an Ashtabula County record 61 points in a win over Colebrook on Dec. 19, 1947.

article, "Most of Spencer's 61 markers were zipped through the hoop on breakaway plays as he took the ball while cutting under the net. He scored from other spots, however, in nailing 28 field goals."

Spencer, described in different places as a center or forward, led the Blue League with 144 points in six games, a 24-point average. Dorset posted a 14-3 mark that year despite losing its first two games.

Dorset was a very small school at the time. In fact, there were only 13 students, boys and girls, in Spencer's sister's graduating class. His class would have had a similar

number.

A writer named Carl Ritter wrote several joke resolutions at the end of that season, including the following:

"Bob Spencer, center who scored 61 points in Dorset High's 117-17 conquest of Colebrook: 'I resolve to ride a motorcycle, a very fast horse or other rapid conveyance when passing through Colebrook and never to be caught in that community after dark.'"

According to his sister, Jean Whobrey, Spencer, who played from 1945-48, had to work his basketball around chores.

"When we took over my grandfather's dairy farm, Bob would do

the milking, catch the school bus, come home and do the same thing," she said. "He was a good student except that he didn't have time to do his homework. So I, as a good sister, did it for him. He was liked by everyone."

"I was the baby of the family on the farm, but I carried milk for him. He was so good to me. He would send me checks for college."

According to Whobrey, Spencer played first base for the local team in the summer.

"All of his sports ability was inherited from his father, Rufus," she said.

Other players on Dorset's basketball team included Jim French,

John Pirinen (Spencer's best friend), Jim Keep and Jim Comp. Keep scored 26 points in the rout of Colebrook and Pirinen added 15.

"I kept score for all his games," Whobrey said. "He was very good, about six feet tall. But he had bad eyesight, so he wore glasses with a guard over it. He was probably the high scorer in every game."

Bob Hitchcock, former Pymatuning Valley coach, is Spencer's nephew.

"When I was a kid, he wanted to help me out," Hitchcock remembers. "He had a basket in the back of his garage. That was a learning

See **SPENCER**, Page 25

Tirabasso had fun playing at Geneva

Center was the jokester on great Geneva teams

By **CHRIS LARICK**
For the Star Beacon

No one knew quite what to expect when Spencer High School and Austinburg High School consolidated with Geneva High School in the fall of 1961.

That was particularly true with the boys basketball team.

Al Bailey, who had been successful as Spencer's coach (98-42), was named head basketball coach. That in itself might have raised some eyebrows in Geneva.

But when the starting lineup was decided and featured four Spencer players — Sam Hands, Bob Legg, Bill Coy and Dave Tirabasso — and only one, Jim Osborne, from Geneva, coupled with the fact that one of the first players off the bench, Jim Prill, was also from Spencer, there must have been some real headshaking among Geneva residents.

The success of that team muted any real protest, however, with the new combination of players winning its first 13 games and finishing at 18-2.

Osborne has already been inducted into the Ashtabula County Basketball Hall of Fame. Tirabasso will be, posthumously, as part of the 2015 class.

"We got along well together," Osborne said of that team. "The people there backed their schools. We enjoyed each other's company. It was easy to get along. We were not from Spencer or Austinburg we were from Geneva High School. We had all been friends before and had played against each other. Under Al Bailey, we became a great team."

Osborne and Tirabasso were the junior starters on that squad. They led the Eagles the following year, when they went just 9-8 in the regular season but surprised everyone in the tournament by upsetting Euclid in the district



Submitted Photo

DAVE TIRABASSO (52) with Geneva Eagle teammates (from left) Jim Osborne, Sam Hanks, Joel Novak, Bill Coy, Bog Legg and coach Al Bailey.

semifinals despite being greatly outsize.

"Their shortest starter was 6-2 or 6-3," Osborne said. "Dave (Tirabasso) was our undersized center. He was listed at 6-2 or 6-3 but was 6-1 at the most."

"I became friends with (Euclid coach) Doc Daugherty later. We always talked about how we were able to play. There's always one way to play against a bigger team — outquick them."

"Dave was a tremendous jumping jack and a great competitor. He was very competitive, even in practice. But he had an infectious

DAVE TIRABASSO

• **SCHOOL:**
Geneva High
School Class of
1962.

• **POSITION:**
Center

• **ACCOLADES:**
Starter on Geneva team that went
18-2 and defeated Euclid in a
district semifinal.



laugh. It was fun to get him going, he laughed from the gut."

"He was a very big guy, mature for his age," Coy said. "He was very strong and a very good rebounder."

Coy, too, remembers Tirabasso's laugh.

"He was a good ballplayer and a real jokester. Al Bailey ran a tight ship, but when we practiced and were going through this series of figure eights, Dave would get us laughing and we would drop the ball; then we'd be in trouble with Bailey. We would make sure we didn't get in his line."

"We became really good friends," Osborne said of Tirabasso. "The next year we lost Hands, Legg and Coy and didn't do as well."

Tirabasso met his wife, Nora

Hall, when he moved from Spencer to Geneva. When he was a senior basketball player, she was a junior majorette. They married in 1966.

"He was an exceptional basketball player," Nora said. "They started calling him, 'The Dunker,' at Geneva. I think his first choice was always football, but he was influenced by Al Bailey. He saw the talent in Dave and took him under his wing. Al and his wife became like second parents to him."

See **TIRABASSO**, Page 26

Craft

From Page 6

Meanwhile, varsity wrestling coach Dave DeLeone needed an assistant and, though he never wrestled, Craft took the job. When DeLeone had a heart attack Craft was moved to the head wrestling position, where he served for four or five years.

It took him a while to get a coaching job in the sport he loved — basketball. When he moved to Harbor to take over the health and physical education job, Dik Pavolino resigned from the head baseball job and Craft took that.

He also coached junior high basketball, coaching with Andy Isco, and served as a freshman football coach. When Isco became varsity basketball coach, Craft became his assistant, a job that included coaching the JV team.

When Isco retired, Craft moved into the head coaching job, which he kept until Harbor and Ashtabula consolidated into Lakeside, when he became Tim Tallbacka's assistant, a job he held three years until he retired in 2004.

His longest coaching stint was in baseball, as head coach at Ashtabula, Harbor and Lakeside for 29 years.

After retirement, Craft moved to Florida and substitute-taught at the Crystal River school district. Recently he moved to Texas, where he subs with the Frisco schools.

"I find it relaxing," he said. "It's a very affluent area and one of the fastest-growing in the country."

Craft has a son, Chris, who is nearing his doctorate degree and lives near Dan; a daughter, Cari, who has a daughter who is a freshman at Louisiana State University; and a son, Devan, who lives in Florida and is in his

first year of nursing school.

Dan started the soccer program for Ashtabula City Schools with the Columbus Junior High team when his son Devan became interested in soccer around 2000 and coached it for four or five years.

"We had to buy our own uniforms until so many players came out for the team at the high-school level that the system began paying for them."

He plays golf with his son Chris, whom Craft terms his "instructor." They play two or three times a week when the weather is nice enough.

"I played with some great people, including Randy Knowles, Billy Johnston, John Wheelock, Jim Hood, Eugene Miller, Tom Church, Scott Humphrey, Jeff Puffer and Al Razem," Craft summarized. "I have great memories of coaching Ryan Turner, Ken Daniel, Carey Estok, Jamel Parker and Jamie Presciano."

Naylor

From Page 14

"We'd get to the regional, then we were done," Naylor said.

Naylor considered going to Mount Union on a track scholarship, which at the time, was a track powerhouse.

"I was set to go, but our center, Don Goodman was going to go to Case as a wide receiver," he said. "This was when Western Reserve and Case were in the process of merging. Jon Hall and I had been friends since the ninth grade and Hall was friends with two coaches at (Western Reserve). I thought the academic part of it made it a good choice. Actually, my first choice was West Point. I applied there and (visited) West Point with Frank Farello and Bill Ritter from Ashtabula. The basketball coach at West Point at that time was Bobby Knight."

That didn't work out for Naylor, though, so he headed for Case-Western Reserve. He played basketball there for two years and ran track for one while planning to be a teacher and coach.

"Everyone said, 'Why are you here (if I wanted to be a teacher),' " Naylor said. "All my friends were pre-law or pre-med. I decided to go into law and dropped out of basket-

ball to concentrate on academics.

"Even Division III basketball is tough and physical. Schools like Cleveland State and Eastern Michigan had big, physical kids. That would wear on us."

Naylor continued on to law school at Case, graduating in early 1971. He moved back to Conneaut and practiced law there for 42 years before retiring in 2013. He and his family now spend five or six months in Arizona and the rest (in the summer) in Ohio.

He married his partner's daughter (Chris Thayer).

"We went on a date in high school, but it didn't click," Naylor said. "We both went to college and when we came home we both had the same summer jobs. We both golf, so we became good friends and golf partners."

The couple married during Chris' senior year and have been married 45 years.

Chris attended Bowling Green and became a professor of computer technology at Kent State Ashtabula, doing that for 28 years. She and Bob have five children: Nancy, Tarry, Jill, Jonathan and Christa. Three of them graduated from Bowling Green, two from Kent State.

Bob and Chris have five grandchildren. They still enjoy golfing, a sport they get to do more of now that they live in Arizona half of the year.

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Horner

From Page 10

The points came.”

Playing center, Horner always strove to be the strongest player on the floor.

“I made the team on defense,” she said. “Our team goal was never to lose to Edgewood. Madison, I remember, was very strong. They had some very good players. High school rivalries were always fun, friends competing against each other. The county itself was neat to grow up in.”

Horner considers Ritari and his wife, Mo, a second family.

“The Ritaris, my Aunt Mo and Uncle Tom, played an integral role in introducing sports to me and supporting my journey from the time I could make my first basket to the day I got to play in the NCAA tournament,” she said. “I must say one of the absolute highlights of my career was finally beating Coach Ritari at a game of one-on-one at Garcia Gymnasium. We played often, and I could never beat him. Then one day after practice my senior year... I won with a baby hook shot he taught me. But that’s not the best part – immediately after that shot, Coach took the ball and heaved it to the rafters in a moment of what I would call half ‘proud coach’ and half ‘I just got beat by a girl’ emotion.”

In basketball Horner twice gained first team all-conference honors, second team all-district and honorable mention all-state accolades. When she graduated she was both Conneaut’s leading rebounder and scorer.

Horner also competed in track for Conneaut, and starting in her sophomore year, in cross country.

Horner was always an outstanding student, and, with a 4.0 GPA, became one of eight valedictorians.

“We were a very talented class,” she said.

She could have gone to any college she wanted and considered Army, Navy, Columbia, Colgate, Ball State and some Chicago schools. She eventually chose Dartmouth, an Ivy League school in Hanover, New Hampshire.

“It was my last official visit and my first plane ride,” she said.

Horner played three years for the Big Green.

“Their mascot is a giant inflatable moose,” she laughed. “It’s in the wilderness. But they have a good library. That’s where I spent my time.

“It was neat because the place was loaded with talent. The people there are unique and talented, destined for something really special.”

Though Dartmouth is very expensive, Horner’s scholarships covered most of her expenses.

As a freshman Horner saw action in 15 games and saved her best game of the season for the NCAA Tournament when she scored four points and grabbed three rebounds in 16 minutes of solid play against the defending national champions.

In her sophomore year (2000-2001) Horner appeared in 17 games, including nine as a starter, averaging 2.1 points and 2.0 rebounds per game, in addition to blocking 14 shots. Her career-best game came against Colgate, when she had 10 points, five rebounds and six blocked shots.

Horner majored in sociology with a fine arts minor.

“Dartmouth is one of those liberal arts schools that teaches you how to learn,” she said. “They want people to leave Dartmouth and get more schooling.”

With that in mind, Horner headed to Chicago after her 2003 graduation and took her master’s at the University of Chicago-Columbia with the intention of becoming a teacher.

“My friend and I wanted to be in a big city,” she said. “I

loved (Chicago). I met my husband while I was there, met him in Milwaukee. I had a handful of jobs while I was there, jobs in insurance and physical therapy.”

She did her student teaching in Chicago, but there were no openings when she finished, so she looked elsewhere, finally settling on Charlotte, N.C., where she taught two years (2010-2012).

From there, the Horners moved to Buffalo. After doing some substitute teaching, she began working as an education specialist for Doodle Bug!, a company specializing in early childhood education.

“We provide support for teachers,” she said. “I love it because I love writing curriculum for the schools there. It’s like coaching in the classroom.”

Tim, whom she married in Buffalo in 2012, works as a product manager at the Brady Corporation in Buffalo, a company that makes safety equipment. The couple has a son, Sean, who was born July 8, 2013.

“I don’t play a lot of sports now, but I still enjoy a good pickup game (of basketball) in the park,” she said. “I did that a lot in Chicago.”

“My folks, my big brother Jeremy and my little sister Jessica all played a part in helping me grow,” Horner said. “Even though my parents weren’t athletes themselves, they were immensely supportive and so proud of everything I set out to accomplish. They made sure there was always a hoop in the driveway — even if we were dribbling in the limestone and smashing the tulips.

“I’m certainly blessed in so many ways. God gave me the athletic talent, drive, and a family and community that helped me become successful. It’s amazing how much a community can influence a young person’s life. So many people played a part in helping me develop as a young athlete and a person and I am forever grateful.”

Kaydo

From Page 12

“(Gephart) took me under his wing. I started at center, though I was probably 6-foot-2 as a sophomore. He was fantastic on fundamentals and coaching defense. He was like a father figure to me. I saw him every day. He was an excellent teacher and a great gentleman. I really respect him. I’d go to his house for dinner; they lived nearby me.”

Lacking height, the Panthers were not a very good team when Kaydo was a sophomore, going about 8-10.

But Ashtabula picked up Ron Showalter, a transfer from Edgewood, and Dave Clemens the following year. Along with the nucleus from Kaydo’s class, including Nappi, Benton and Lyons, the Panthers became a formidable team, going 17-4.

“I was the forward, played the wing,” Kaydo said. “Alvin Benton was at center, Showalter the other forward and Nappi and Clemens the (starting) guards. Ron Showalter and Jerry Lyons were seniors. Larry Alberts and Jerry Lyons started for them the next year when they were seniors. Phil Fain was our sixth man. We went 20-2 and won the NEC and City Series.”

Kaydo led the team in scoring as a senior with 16 per game, but four of the Panthers averaged double figures.

“I was an extremely good defensive player,” Kaydo said. “I guarded the best player on the opposing team, whether he was big or short.”

According to Kaydo, the Panthers were the 18th-ranked team in the Cleveland area at the time. They beat Perry, 71-47, to make the district tournament, but were beaten by Cleveland East. Kaydo, Nappi and Benton all made the all-tournament team and Kaydo was selected all-county and all-NEC team as a junior and senior and was an honorable-mention All-Ohio choice as a senior.

He was about as good in football, starting as a sophomore as a punter before tearing a ligament in his leg. He returned as a starter at end and defensive line.

Then, as a senior all three Panther running backs got hurt, he moved on to that position and became a first-team all-county and all-NEC pick on those teams, too. After the season, he was named third-team All-Ohio as a defensive back. Other honors he reaped dur-

ing his high school career were MVP in football and basketball, winner of the Richard Regner sports scholarship and the Judd Carleton football award.

Kaydo could have played either basketball or football on a scholarship in college. But his brother, Mike had gone on to play football at Ohio University and Ashtabula coach Tony Chiaccchio had a pipeline to that school.

“My mother wanted me to go there,” Kaydo said.

Recruited as a defensive back and running back on a full scholarship, Kaydo was switched to wide receiver. He saw playing time for three years, but didn’t start. Part of the problem was a succession of injuries, including a knee that required surgery, hip pointers, bad ankles and a broken sternum.

He majored in health and physical education at OU, going there four years, but did not graduate.

“I was supposed to do my student teaching, but got sick,” he said. “I became a police officer in Ashtabula in 1972-1973.”

He was offered a job selling cars for Dorn Cobbledick in Ashtabula and never left that business.

Later in 1973 he moved to Jerry Sinker Ford, then to Jerry Walrath’s, where he worked for 18 years.

Altogether, Kaydo has been in the automobile business for 43 years. He has worked for Great Lakes GMC-Buick for 18 years, now serving as senior executive.

“I’m employed by John Rocco and Joey Huang, who are great bosses and fantastic dealers,” he said. “They care about their customers. I’m honored to work for them.”

Kaydo is married to Janice and the couple have one daughter (Jacquelynn) and one granddaughter, Elaine, 5.

He enjoys playing golf with his brother Mike, Dr. Bell, Gordy Balmford, Bruce Taylor, Tom Headman, Don Vincenzo and Kenny Melaragno.

“My brother (Mike) is my idol,” he said. “I’ve always looked up to him. He was a good college player. If I had a son, I’d like for him to be coached by Mike.”

Kampf

From Page 11

my buddies,” he said. “We won 50 games in three years and put (coach) Tom (Henson) over 100 (victories for his career). I later played softball with Tom (Henson) and Mick (Zigmund). They were more than coaches to me.”

But, more and more, Kampf was drawn to writing as an outlet for his talents. He wrote for the Mustang Roundup, a “flimsy thing,” according to Kampf, which chronicled Grand Valley football and basketball games.

He considers his eventual career in sports writing as a combination of his parents’ talents and interests, “Dad’s love for sports and Mom’s love for writing,” as he puts it.

John Kampf Sr. owned and ran a dairy farm at the time and, naturally, John Jr. was expected to help out with those chores. But John often got a pass on those to play sports. It might not have seemed that way at the time, but eventually that paid off.

It certainly didn’t seem that a writing career was in his future when John Jr., after his graduation from Grand Valley in 1987, headed to Ohio State with a major in dairy science and research. He had already proven his knowledge of the field when his Orwell team won the state championship in the Dairy Bowl, the dairy farmer’s equivalent of Academic Challenge. The Orwell group went on to finish second in the nation.

But a dairy science major naturally had to take many science courses.

“I got annihilated in all those science courses,” he said.

So he changed his major to journalism.

“The longest walk in my life was the walk from my house to the barn to tell my dad (who had counted on John taking over the dairy farm for him) I had changed majors,” Kampf said. “But his love for sports was still there. We always went to sports events together. He’s a huge part of what I am. When people say, ‘You’re like your dad,’ I consider that a



Submitted Photo

JOHN KAMPF shown with his sisters: (front row from left) Seanna Butler, Erin Melillo and Paula Kampf, and (back) Lauren Matthews.

huge compliment. We’ve done things together (since I became a sports writer) like go to Spring Training. It’s a huge joy to have my dad with me.”

At Ohio State, Kampf joined the staff of the school newspaper (the Lantern) and was assigned the women’s basketball beat. At the time, Nancy Darsch was the coach of an Ohio State women’s team that was even better than the men’s team, or, for that matter, the football team.

“They won, like 88 Big Ten (games) in a row,” Kampf said. “They won 10 championships in a row. That was a lot of fun to cover. Basketball was better than football at Ohio State at that time. Jimmy Jackson was on the men’s team.”

Kampf particularly liked the fact that Mick Shoaf, whom he graduated from Grand Valley with, was there too, starting on the offensive line for the Buck-

eyes.

“I worked for the Lantern off and on for two years,” he said. “The last quarter I was sports editor. The Lantern is still the biggest newspaper I ever worked for. It’s circulation is maybe 80,000, with all the branches. I wrote columns and covered all sports. I had a lot of good times there.”

Before he had even taken a writing course at Ohio State, Kampf landed his first writing job, as a summer intern with the Jefferson Gazette.

“They had no reason to hire me,” he said. “But I knew agriculture in Ashtabula County. I did fair stories and 4-H stories. It was a blast for me; I knew everybody.

“After I graduated, they offered me a job, to come back and do sports. I graduated on a Friday morning and came back and covered a (high school) football game that night.”

He worked at the Gazette from 1991 to 1997.

“I did a little bit of everything there,” he said. “We’d cover Jefferson games or Grand Valley stuff. The Gazette owned the Geneva and Madison Tribune. There was a whole chain of (publications). Each town had its own paper.”

In 1997 he moved to the Star Beacon, where he worked with Karl Pearson, Tom Harris and this reporter.

“I really enjoyed my time there,” he said.

On July 31, 2002, Kampf was hired by the News Herald, which had opened a bureau in Ashtabula and wanted him to cover the sports in the county.

After a couple of years, he was moved to the business office in Willoughby. His first beats were swimming, tennis and golf. Eventually he became the primary “prep” (high school) writer, cov-

JOHN KAMPF

• **SCHOOL:** Grand Valley High School Class of 1988

• **ACCOLADES:** Played on Mustang football teams that won 50 games from 1984-87; won Ohio Prep Sports Writer of the Year in 2006 and 2009, and finished second in 2008.



ering football in the fall, wrestling in the winter and softball in the spring.

But the plum job he acquired was the Ohio State football job.

“2008 was the first year I did that,” he said. “It was a great gig. I got to go to all of the BCS Bowl games except the Orange Bowl.”

Basically, the job means traveling to Columbus for the Monday press conferences and the Saturday games.

“Night games are my friend,” he said in reference to the difficulty of covering Friday night football games, then getting up and driving to Columbus for the Ohio State games, some of which start at noon.

“I’d run into Tom Penna and Rick Pugliese (Ashtabula friends of Urban Meyer) at some of the games,” he said.

Road games were even a greater test of endurance, though the News Herald cut down on its coverage of those contests in recent years.

Honors Kampf has won include Ohio Prep Sports Writer of the Year in 2006 and 2009, and second-place in that category in 2008.

“I want to thank the teachers and coaches at Grand Valley, who were extremely influential on me,” he said, “my mom, from whom I got my love of writing and really got me into this, my dad, who passed on his love of sports to me and my four sisters. We had a great time growing up together. Jimmy (Henson) has always been a brother to me.

“I’m humbled. I don’t think I’m a Hall of Famer; it was just fun to be a part of. If I hadn’t had the surgery and broken my arm three times, I might never have written.”

Hitchcock

From Page 9

mostly JV as a freshman, though he got into some varsity games toward the end of the year.

He started as a sophomore on a team led by John Bleshoy and a few other seniors. The Lakers didn't do very well that year, but with Smith, Hitchcock, Mike Weese and Doug Bryan playing as youngsters, the future looked brighter. Oman and Poole added size to the mix and Freeman was headed to PV from Conneaut.

"We started to see how the pieces would fit," Hitchcock said.

With Freeman, Gordy Hitchcock, Poole and Scott Vyner in the paint and Brown and Hitchcock at guards. The Lakers moved up to about 13-7 his junior year.

The whole group went to a Mount Union camp the summer before the 1987-88 season, playing against all-Ohioans like John Buford and Treg Lee.

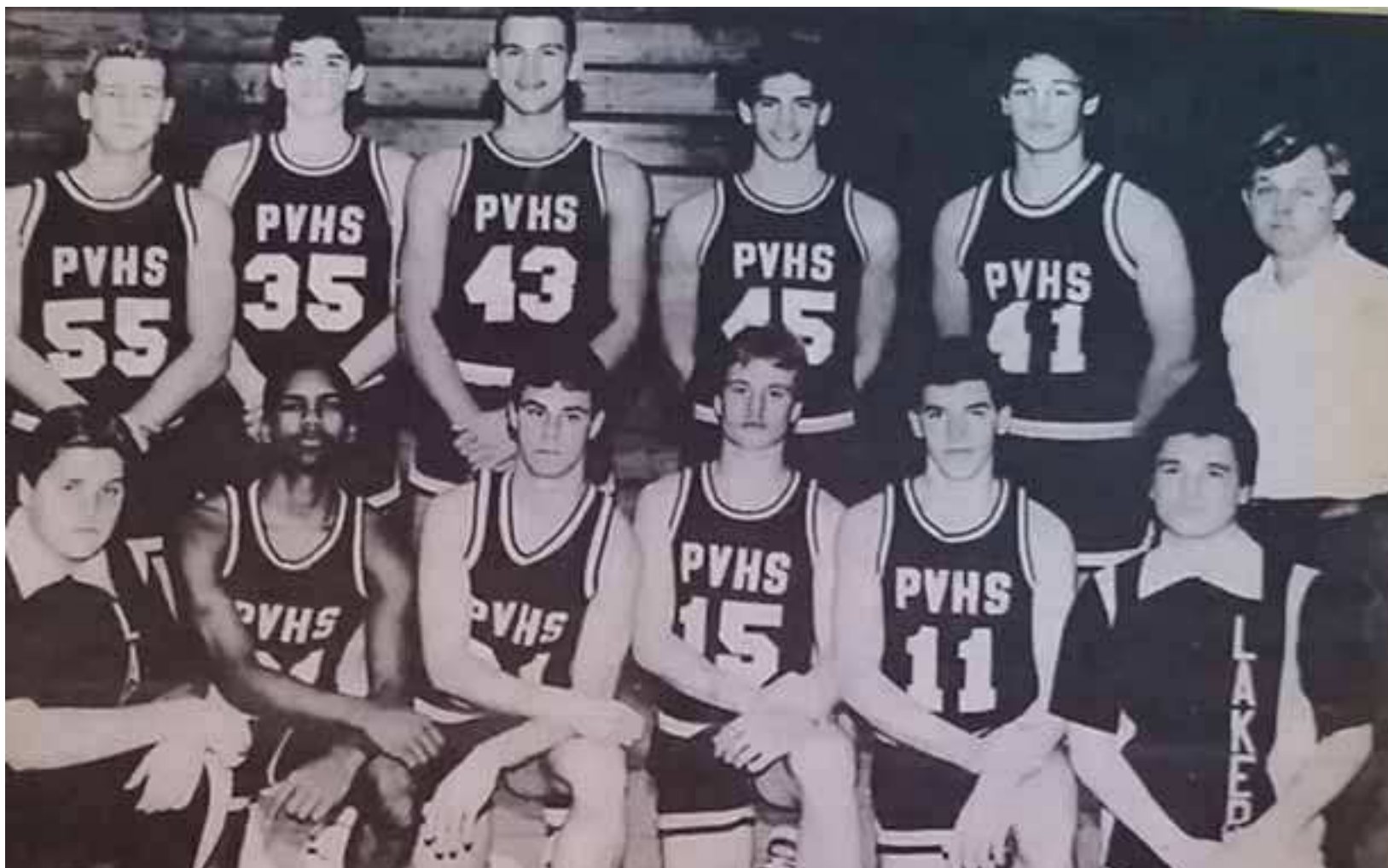
"We came together as a group," Hitchcock said. "We beat some of those teams, had some success, worked together."

Going into Hitchcock's senior season, the Lakers were a confident bunch.

"We didn't expect to lose," he said. "We had the talent to be in every game. When we walked on the floor we didn't think anybody was better than us."

With Hitchcock at the point, Brown at shooting guard, Freeman at the three and Poole and Oman in the middle, PV had a potent starting group. But the bench was good, too, with Vyner, Rashan Welsh, Craig Koperhaven, Jason Root, Brad McNeilly and Mark Pittsinger.

The Lakers also had a great coach in Bob Hitchcock.



Submitted Photo

DOUG HITCHCOK (third from left) is shown with the Pymatuning Valley Lakers basketball team.

"I know my dad was one of the better coaches in the area," Doug said. "He was good with personalities. It wasn't all about Xs and Os, though he knew those. He knew how to push your buttons. Sometimes we wouldn't speak to each other for a few days, but it made me better."

"On that team, no one cared who scored. That was our M.O. Being undefeated, we got everybody's best shot."

Hitchcock also gives assistant coach (and JV coach) Perry Nicholas a share of credit for the team's success.

"Perry was a tremendous person and educator, a good role model for me," Hitchcock said. "I really respected him."

That perfect 1987-1988 record (20-0 in the regular season) was almost over

before it began. In the very first game against Lakeview, the Lakers needed overtime to prevail.

"I got a little nervous," Hitchcock said. "That brought us down to earth a little bit. We beat Warren JFK in a good game. We had to hit free throws at the end of the game to win that one."

Hitchcock was the playmaker for the team, loaded with scorers in Freeman, Brown, Poole and Oman. But people noticed his contributions. Despite averaging only about 10 points per game, he was named the Grand River Conference's Player of the Year and was a Star Beacon All-Ashtabula County first-teamer and an all-Ohioan. In a poll taken later, he was chosen as "the best point guard to play at PV."

He also played football and

baseball, as a wide receiver and defensive back in football and centerfielder on the baseball team. When he was in Little League, the area team won the state championship.

"I played with great players and a great coach," he said of his basketball career. "I played my role and did my thing, tried to make everyone happy by distributing the ball."

After graduating from Pymatuning Valley in 1988, Hitchcock entered Kent State University without an athletic scholarship.

"I was just an average high school player," he said. "From Day One I knew I'd be a teacher and coach. I knew how rewarding it was for my dad and Perry (Nicholas). It was a good decision."

When he graduated, he

landed a job at Grand Valley.

"I had great mentors at Grand Valley in Jim and Tom Henson," Hitchcock said. "Evelyn Henson (Jim's wife) was my principal. She always did what was best for the kids. I coached football and basketball with Jim and Tom."

From Grand Valley, Hitchcock went back to PV as a teacher and coach, then to Madison for three years as assistant principal before getting his first job as a principal at LaBrae. He's now in his fifth year as principal at Grand Valley.

"We have a great staff and great kids at Grand Valley," he said. "That makes the work enjoyable."

As an administrator he had to give up coaching, but still coaches fundamentals in the summer.

Doug married Janna (Bowman), whom he met in his senior year at PV. Janna is now the school nurse at Maplewood. The couple lives in Roaming Shores with their four children: Lucas, a senior at Jefferson; Sam, a sophomore at Jefferson; Madeline, an eighth grader at Jefferson Middle School; and Grant, a fourth grader.

Lucas led the Falcons as a quarterback in football and point guard in basketball. Sam is on the Jefferson teams, too, and both Madeline and Grant are on their school's basketball teams.

"We're blessed to have tremendous parents," Doug said. "They taught us to work hard. Both my parents and Brian and Deanna McGirr (Janna's parents) are a big part of our kids' lives."

Schulte

From Page 15

Mariners at quarterback in football, teaming with his best friend, Hood, for one of the best passing combinations in county history.

The Mariners finished 8-2 in football his senior year, beating Geneva but getting beaten by St. John, 8-7, in the wind and mud at Wenner Field after a Harbor punt sailed backward in the wind. Conneaut actually won the NEC championship that year, 1981.

Georgia Tech coaches recruited him as a basketball player when the Mariners played Ashtabula and said later, on the phone, that they were going to offer him a scholarship. But the head coach got fired, and the offer was pulled.

"I thought about playing hoops in college, but I needed a scholarship," Schulte said. "My parents weren't in a position to send me. It got to the end of the summer and West Virginia Wesleyan lost a quarterback and offered me a scholarship. I had nothing else concrete, so I took it."

When he graduated from college, his first job was at a newspaper, the Charlotte Observer in North Carolina, for a short time before returning to Ashtabula to take his first radio job at 102-ZOO, beginning in sales. Within six months he was named sales manager and in nine or 10 months, general manager.

"I've been a General Manager-Vice-President ever since, until about five years later, when I became President of the Media One Group," he said.

In 1984, his year of ineligibility caused by the transfer from West Virginia Wesleyan to Ohio Wesleyan, Schulte played basketball for the Kent State Ashtabula branch campus.

"I was the MVP," he said. "Basketball was always my first love."

After Schulte graduated from college, KSU Ashtabula athletic director Bob Dulak hired him as the coach there.

"I was 24 when I started that job," he said. "(Dulak) later said that was one of the best hires he ever made. I took it so seriously.



Submitted Photo

DANA SCHULTE shown dribbling up the court during a game for Harbor High School (left) and currently (right).

My first year we were only 1-16 or so, the next year we won five or six, then the third year we were 14-6 or something like that. We were building the program, but (Kent State) stopped (athletics on the branch campuses).

"I really enjoyed it. I was living in Ashtabula at the time. I put so much time and effort into it. I would have done it another 10 years."

Schulte will soon resume his basketball playing with his

friends, bad knee or no bad knee. Meanwhile, he looks back in fondness to his high school days at Harbor, playing with Hood, Colucci, Kangas, Wilburger, Ginn, Quinn and Juhola.

"They can never take away the

memories I have," he said. "Not to say that I live in the past, but those are great memories. That led to everything I've done, the leadership, the motivation, the work ethic I learned in high school."

Henson

From Page 8

height, she played as a hitter when she was in the front row.

“I had some jumps in me back in the day,” she said.

She lettered four years in volleyball and softball and three in basketball.

She got the basketball scholarship she dreamed about at Edinboro and played four years as a shooting guard, accumulating 1,263 points, 16th in school history but 10th when she graduated. In addition, she still holds the school records for the Fighting Scots for 3-point shots made in a season (88) and in a career (275).

“It was a real good conference,” she said. “Not everybody made the playoffs and we did three of my four years there. We were always over .500.”

One of her most memorable games at Edinboro came against Slippery Rock her junior year. Force hit six 3s and teammate Jodi Calderone made five.

“We won the game,” Force said. “Jackie Altenweg from Perry played for Slippery Rock at the time. That was exciting because our coach had gone with all guards in this game and we won.”

Another game she remembers well occurred in her senior year against Indiana University of Pa.

“We were down by one and a play was set up for Luchelle Crawl on our team,” Force remembers. “She wasn’t open so I decided to attack the basket to try to get fouled. I didn’t get fouled, but I made the layup and we won by one. Sarah Zdesar, who played at VASJ, played for Slippery Rock. So I looked at this game as I finally won against a VASJ player, since they always beat us in the tournament.”

Force graduated in 2003 with a major in early childhood elementary education. Her older sister Kim, a teacher at Grand Valley, became pregnant and Krystal took over as a full-time substitute for her, finishing the year out.

The following year two other Grand Valley teachers became pregnant and Force filled in for them.

After that she taught the title program for two years and has taught



KRYSTAL HENSON (FORCE) plays defense during a game while playing for Edinboro University.

third grade in the Grand Valley system for the past eight years.

In 2008 she married Paul Force, whom she had known since she was 14 when he worked at her dad’s camp. Paul was coaching North’s girls in a game against Grand Valley, coached by Krystal’s sister, Kim.

The two got reacquainted and started dating. Paul currently teach-

es health at Willoughby Middle School and is the varsity girls coach at North, with Krystal as his assistant.

The Forces have two sons, Jordan, 4, and Logan, 1. Krystal’s parents, Tom and Carla, attend the North girls games with their grandchildren.

Krystal often plays against the

North girls during open gym and she and Paul, a former star under Chad Frazier at West Geauga, still play against each other fairly often.

“I beat him once,” Krystal said.

“I owe a lot of success to my dad,” she said, “for all the time he spent with me. Sometimes we’d yell at each other because I’d get frustrated. I used to play one-on-one against

A.J. (her nephew). I’m like an older sister to him. He finally beat me. It’s a joy to see someone put as much time and effort in as he does.

“My mom was always the cheerleader and I owe a lot of my success to my sisters and to my grandma and grandpa’s support. It was fun to see them in the stands.”

Submitted Photo

Spencer

From Page 17

experience. When I started playing basketball, he would talk to me in general about (his career). He never wanted to talk about himself.”

Spencer married Ruth Hitchcock (Bob’s aunt) and ran the dairy farm until his son, Bob Jr., took over. The Spencers had four children: Cindy, who now lives in South Dakota; Bob, Larry, and Chrissa. There are four grandchildren.

Spencer would never talk about his sports career. When one writer wanted to tell his story, according to Whobrey, Spencer refused.

“He had read a couple of letters to the editor criticizing his coach for letting him play in the game so long,” she said. “It hurt his feelings.”

“He was a very good person who would help anyone out. When his mother became ill with diabetes, he and Ruth took care of her. Our father was in a nursing home.”

Spencer died just before his 82nd birthday.



Submitted Photo

BOB SPENCER shown with his family. Spencer holds the Ashtabula County record for points in a game with 61.

Silvius

From Page 16

He married Peggy Berry, a 1957 Spencer graduate whose father ran Berry’s Mink Farm near Geneva, in 1957. Silvius played for his father-in-law’s team, the Berry Minks, for a while.

The couple had five children, one of whom, Robin, died in childhood. The others are Rhonda, Rick, Ronnie and Renee. They were all good athletes, according to Ron. A niece, Laura was inducted into the ACBF Hall of Fame last year.

Ron likes outdoor sports. He has a boat and still does some fishing, mostly for walleye and perch.



Submitted Photo

KIKI McNAIR, shown in a current photo, was a key member of several strong Jefferson teams in the late ‘90s.

McNair

From Page 13

December, 2002, McNair went to London on a work visa and waited tables at the Bicendum Oyster House, a restaurant in South Kensington in the highly-regarded Michelin Star Restaurant chain. She used the opportunity to see all of the sights in London.

She returned to the states in 2003, working at the Wharton Business School of the University of Pennsylvania, spending three or four months there before moving back to New Orleans.

For a year she waited tables, then began her career in university administration at her alma mater, Loyola of New Orleans.

“I started in the records office and was promoted three or four times, winding up in the Dean of Arts and Sci-

ences’ office,” she said.

In 2011 McNair went to California for five months before getting a job at the University of Mississippi in university administration as an assistant to the chairman of theater arts. After a year and a half there, she decided to attend graduate school in creative writing at the City College of New York in New York City.

“I’ve got an apartment in Harlem and am in my third semester, with two semesters left,” McNair, now 35, said. “I’m also an adjunct professor in world literature, teaching things like ‘The Odyssey.’ It’s a dream come true. It’s how I support myself now.”

She no longer plays basketball, but does things like yoga to stay in shape, along with playing tennis.

“I’ve slowed down a little bit,” she said.

Tirabasso

From Page 18

After his graduation from Geneva in 1963, Tirabasso was granted a full scholarship to Gannon College, where his brother had gone.

“He didn’t finish at Gannon,” Nora said. “He had a hard time adjusting after being number one at Geneva. It was a real adjustment for him. Gannon was an all-male Catholic school at the time. It was a really elite school. He did attend Kent State after we married.”

After leaving college, Tirabasso was eventually hired by the Illuminating Company and worked up to management. He retired in 1997 after 31 years there.



**DAVE
TIRABASSO**

“During our marriage he coached basketball at Assumption School in Geneva,” Nora said. “He was very active in the church.”

Tirabasso also played for one of the better community teams at the time, Pruden’s Chicks.

Meanwhile, Nora started working at Geneva Hospital and worked up to a management position, before moving to Lake Health in the 1990s, where she became a supervisor. She is now retired but still works in registration there on a part-time basis.

The couple originally built a home in Geneva. They built another house in Cameron Marcy’s development, but that caught on fire in 2001.

They have two daughters: Kimberly and Carie. Kimberly has two daughters, Hannah and Abigail.

When Dave retired, he had no real hobbies. The Tirabassos moved to Fairport Harbor because of Nora’s job. Dave purchased a boat and loved fishing. He also loved the Cleveland Browns.

He became interested in cars and bought a 1957 Chevy that he raced at drag strips, winning several trophies.



DAVE TIRABASSO (right) and Bill Coy accept All-County rings from Geneva superintendent Clyde Ingham.

Submitted Photo

“He wasn’t real social, was more of a loner,” Nora said of Dave, who died Oct. 8, 2011, at the age of 66.

According to Osborne, Tirabasso developed a lot of health problems in his older age.

Coy said Tirabasso had throat cancer.

“It was terrible what happened to him. The last time I saw him was at a coffee shop (in Geneva). I went over and sat down and talked to him.”

But Tirabasso hated for people to see him in the condition he was in.

“We tried to get him to go to our class reunions, but he didn’t feel like he could present himself like the Dave Tirabasso we knew,”

Osborne said. “We’d always call him to ask him to come.

“I count him as a great friend. If I went to war, I’d like to have him on my side. He was a major part of our success and a major part of our lives.”

ASHTABULA COUNTY COACHES



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

NANCY BARBO (left) led the Geneva Eagles to a Division II regional final game while **Steve French** (right) led the Falcons to a 22-2 record and a Division II sectional title. Both were named the Star Beacon's Ashtabula County Coach of the Year.

GIRLS

Edgewood	Steve Kray
Conneaut	Tony Pasanen
Geneva	Nancy Barbo
Lakeside	Bill Osborne
Grand Valley	Kim Triskett
Jefferson	Steve Locy
Pymatuning Valley	Jeff Compan
St. John	Nick Iarocci

BOYS

Edgewood	John Bowler
Conneaut	Tim Tallbacka
Geneva	Matt Vespa
Lakeside	Jim Hood
Grand Valley	Matt Brumit
Jefferson	Steve French
Pymatuning Valley	Ryan Schontz
St. John	Jon Hall



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